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SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: DFM BRIEFS DIP CORPS ON OCCUPIED  
TERRITORIES FIRE, UN RESOLUTION

11. (U) Sensitive but Unclassified, Protect Accordingly.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: At a September 1 briefing for the Baku diplomatic corps, DFM Araz Azimov explained GOAJ reasons for its UNGA draft resolution concerning the occupied territories' fires. He said Azerbaijan's revised draft resolution preserved the 'environmental and humanitarian core' of the earlier draft, while leaving out any political issues. He said the GOAJ was focused not on placing the blame for the fires, but on mobilizing an environmental operation, focusing on fire suppression and soil rehabilitation, "to be conducted through cooperation by the parties as a confidence-building measure." END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) On September 1, DCM and Econoff attended a Foreign Ministry Briefing for the Baku diplomatic corps, hosted by DFM Araz Azimov, on the "Situation on the Ongoing Fires in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan and the Draft Resolution put forward by Azerbaijan in this regard at the UN General Assembly."

14. (SBU) In the briefing, complete with slides and information packets for all attendees, Azimov said the fires have expanded to cover approximately 600-800 square kilometers of occupied territory. He said that the GOAJ was not particularly interested in raising the issue of the cause of the fires or any responsibility for them (although he did note that only agricultural lands and villages were ablaze, and that the 'selective' spread pattern of the fires was 'strange'). He said that the GOAJ was primarily concerned with mobilizing support for an environmental operation focusing on fire suppression and rehabilitation of the affected soils, since the Azerbaijani population would eventually be returning to these agricultural lands and would have to make a living from them. As such, the GOAJ has requested the international community to mobilize its relevant expertise and resources for this environmental operation.

15. (SBU) Azimov said that pursuant to the Geneva Convention of 1949, the occupying party bears responsibility for reacting to this type of occurrence, and that an occupying power's policy of 'no response' only adds to the occupying party's responsibility. He said he hoped that Armenia would play a constructive role. He said that the GOAJ had revised the draft resolution it had put forward for the UNGA, and that the revised draft resolution (A/60/L.60/Rev.1 - faxed separately) was the "environmental and humanitarian core" of the previous draft. He described it as an 'apolitical' draft that sought merely to find a constructive, target-oriented,

environmentalist approach to suppressing the fires and rehabilitating the affected soil. This draft resolution was essential because the GOAJ had no other option, and because the UNGA was the most authoritative forum to deal with the issue.

¶6. (SBU) Azimov told the assembled diplomats that there was no political reason to oppose the resolution, and that the envisioned environmental operation could serve as a confidence-building measure which could lead to others. As such, he asked for the assembled countries' support for the draft resolution when it is discussed on September 5 at UNGA.  
HYLAND